

# *O.V.A.U.G. News*

## Hardware & software announcements

**P**hase 5 digital products announces development of pre/box a Power PC based computer system with Amiga OS 3.1. Phase 5 expects it to be out around the fourth quarter of 1998.

**S**iamese systems announces pre-orders for its PC based Amiga board. This board will be a complete, AGA-based Amiga on a PCI board allowing 100% Amiga compatibility and speed with Wintel-based PC's

### **SOFTWARE TO COME**

Image FX 3.0 to be unveiled at Amiga "98". The newset version of the

ImageFX graphics program to be demoed at the Amiga "98" show in St. Louis.

Asimware Innovations Inc. releases it's AsimCDFS v3.9 the latest version of the premier cd rom file system for the Amiga adds support for more drivers and adds features.

AEMail is an Amiga E-mail program with a graphical interface designed to read, process, compose and send E-mail from a Amiga computer over the internet. It provides an easy to use graphical interface to use designed specifically for

the Amiga.

A.C. GUIDE is finally coming back again in the form of thick magazine book or a cd-rom. It has been sorely missed in the past few years for its comprehensive vendor list and products for the Amiga.

**A**miCON Midwest Amiga Expo. It is being scheduled for November of 1998 in a new larger facility than the Amiga 1997 and will be able to host more vendors and other booths.

Watch the Amiga Web directory for more information on this upcoming show.

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This months meeting will be on March 31st. at 8:00 pm

## **Siamese Systems Accepting Pre-orders for its PC-based Amiga Board For immediate release 4th March 1998. Siamese v4, PCI based Amiga.**

### **Fellow Amigan**

As you are probably aware the Siamese System has been developed to bring the Amiga into the mainstream computer market to create a hybrid Amiga/Windows platform that can bring rewards to the Amiga owner by giving them access to the low cost PC components, and to the PC owner by bringing the richness of the Amiga software base. Initially the Siamese System worked with Serial (for RTG) and SCSI (for File Transfer), followed by v2.5 which now uses the Ethernet and TCP/IP protocol. Now we are working on Siamese v4.0 which is based around a complete AGA Amiga on a PCI card which can take a 33mhz 68040 or a 66mhz 68060.

This system has many aims in life which are as follows:-

1. To give Amiga owners the Ultimate and fastest Amiga ever, and one that is fully backward compatible.
2. To push the Amiga Alpha project into the next stage and giving the Amiga the Alpha chip power.
3. To create the Ultimate Hybrid machine using Amiga / Macintosh / Windows operating systems in one box.
4. To give the PC access to the Macintosh software market and creating a hybrid Macintosh / PC using this card.
5. To give the PC and Mac owners a new software base of the great and inexpensive Amiga software.

However, we face a dilemma with the Amiga market in the position it is in with users holding back on investing in Amiga hardware until they see something happening at Amiga Inc. We are working on the Macintosh version of this product because we know there is a very large market for this innovative product, born out by the hundreds of emails received since the press release was sent out last week. However, we are concerned about the lack of activity in the Amiga market. Even though the Siamese system has sold in reasonable numbers, being the best selling product at many dealers, this is not what we would consider selling in a strong enough volume to encourage us to invest the many thousands of pounds necessary to create a full Amiga version of the Siamese v4. This project is not just software and involves expensive hardware design work, therefore we must be financially very careful.

As many should be aware I have backed the Amiga since 1988 and have stuck solely with this market until now, but financial pressures are forcing us to push into other markets to survive. Having read the announcement from Vulcan software I can only agree and applaud his brave and from the heart comments. I believe that by pushing into another market that is prepared to upgrade to newer hardware we can earn the revenues needed to create new and exciting Amiga products, and bring back the old Amiga user who could afford to support the development community. A knock on effect would be that these new PC/Mac users could later be turned onto the Amiga software market with a simple upgrade disk, we call this "Amiga by Stealth". As I hope you can see this is very important for the future of the Amiga and can have a very beneficial effect on the Amiga developers by selling their software to Mac owners running on the Siamese v4 Amiga.

Now to the main point of this message posting, we need to be sure that there is a market for this great new Amiga product that we are preparing before we invest in the development. So we need to know how many people will order this product upon completion, are prepared to put down a deposit on the final price, and pay the balance within 30 days of availability. The retail price of this product excluding CPU is to be 399.00 Pounds including UK vat, and \$499 in the US.

We are working the deposit on a sliding scale approach so that the bigger the deposit the more you will save on the final price. The chart is based on the UK price and this is the amount the UK and European price will be based on. Bear in mind that the deposit is non refundable unless we do not deliver the product. Time for delivery would be about three to four months from date final decision on whether this product should go ahead..

25.00 pounds deposit Total price to pay inc. deposit 375.00 pounds saving of 25.00 pounds  
50.00 pounds deposit Total price to pay inc. deposit 350.00 pounds saving of 50.00 pounds  
100.00 pounds deposit Total price to pay inc. deposit 325.00 pounds. Saving of 75.00 pounds

If you are a dealer, you can pre order from the first batch and if you meet the right order quantities you can become a

distributor for that territory, obviously the same rule applies and a deposit must be paid up front. Please contact us if you wish to be a dealer and we will send you the special introduction prices.

There is a time scale on this, and if we do not reach near enough to the 500 units the product will have to be dropped, I am sorry but that is the way it has to be. We have invested everything in this Amiga market and can not do it any longer unless there are people who are willing to order the product. This is not a new idea and it happens in many other areas where there is a very small potential market.

As you can see it is worth paying the deposit and as long as we meet a target of 500 boards we will invest the money needed into the Amiga version of the "Siamese PCI Amiga". This may seem like an extraordinary way to develop a product but the software is 80% complete and the hardware is 60% complete. However the development cost is too high when the Amiga buying public have become so lethargic about paying for new Amiga products and at the same time complain about the lack of development.

Remember we are not a large company with deep pockets, we are an Amiga company working in the best tradition of the Computer market on a tight budget and with more ideas than money. I hope that you will see the sense in this and understand that we want this new Amiga to appear, but we cannot develop it just for fun, it must have a market to sell too. I have already had a large amount of interest in this board and I am confident that this confirmed order scheme will work, which is why I am risking a good flaming to put the reality out there to the community. I hope that this is acceptable to most Amiga users, the ones I have field tested this on have all been very positive and encouraged me to continue, so this is now up to you, are you in or out?

For those who say how can it be faster than any other Amiga, well it works like this, all I/O, graphics display, sound and file operations will be processed by the host PC/Alpha processor, and the bandwidth across the PCI bus is about 10 times the Zorro3 bus speed. Therefore the 680x0 processor just sends a simple system request and carries on processing code. We expect to give between 50-100% effective speed increase for the processor being the equivalent of a 133mhz 68060. To back this up, the Amiga will have OpenGL using the Host PC and its graphics card to render and therefore again no work for the 68060. Finally, an average PC graphics card will always be faster than an Amiga card because of the increase in bus speed that this new system will have access too. Also if this card is fitted into the Alpha, the gradual Amiga porting will give incredible performance increases way in advance of any PowerPC chip based card.

Finally let me talk about money, as this is very important. You can buy a cheap 233mhz PC for around 600.00, add the Siamese PCI card and a processor from your existing accelerator, ( if removable ) and for 1000 have the most innovative computer on the Planet.

What about games, well this card has a full AGA chip set on board, so most games should work without any problems through the Amiga Video output, also if you wanted to create a hybrid Analogue / Digital video system with your existing Genlock you could with this card. This is something sadly lacking in the budget video world, again another Amiga first.

Please [check out our web site](#) for more details about the potential of the card and if you want to join the plan there is an email form to fill in and we will send you the paper work.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Jones  
Managing Director  
Siamese Systems



## **Phase 5 Digital Products Announces Development of the Pre\Box, a PowerPC-Based Computer System with Amiga OS 3.1**

### **Taking The Next Step Towards PowerPC Multiprocessing, The Pre\Box Will Take Off to New Performance Dimensions**

Beside the finalization of upcoming products such as the CyberVisionPPC and the BVisionPPC graphics cards, phase 5 digital products has started a new development project for a stand-alone, PowerPC-based computer system, called the pre\box, which will use the licensed AMIGA OS 3.1 and a further advanced version of the PowerUP System Software to provide Amiga compatibility on the AMIGA OS/Workbench 3.1 level under CyberGraphX V3.

"The license agreement that we have signed with Amiga International allows us to start the development project of this new machine, which had been in conceptual design for several months now. It is an important step for revitalizing the Amiga market, encouraging developers and rebuilding a market which is strong enough to maintain" says Wolf Dietrich, General Manager of phase 5. In a separate announcement Dietrich states that the A\BOX, the long-term technology project of phase 5 digital products, is postponed but not cancelled. "The A\BOX project will be continued with revised targets and specifications and with extended resources, based on the succesful introduction of the new product lines". Dietrich points out that the key for the survival of the Amiga and the Amiga market is the availability of new outstanding stand-alone hardware products as soon as possible, a goal which shall be reached with the pre\box design. "We need an expanding market in the very near future, or the battle may be lost for the Amiga computer system" he adds.

The new pre\box machines will be targeting the medium and upper price regions for PCs or Personal Workstations, but are designed to provide stunning performance. All systems will come as multi-processing systems with at least four PowerPC CPUs installed, which will allow them to provide an extremely high computing power at an outstanding price/performance relation. "Multi-processing has been one of the most important goals, if not THE most important design goal for phase 5 digital products in the past 18 months" explains Wolf Dietrich. "It is here where alternative technology can offer advantages and superiority over the mainstream products in the PC market. While our current PowerUP product line, which consists of upgrade cards for existing machines, helps the user to update his system and secure the investments made in existing hardware and software, it is a challenge to built new stand-alone hardware products which can price-wise compete with the mainstream PCs - especially under the impression that PC systems are blown out at dumping prices regularly, and that a PC system you buy today maybe outdated and nearly worthless in less than a year." Consequently, the company does not plan to build single-CPU systems which would have to compete at a similar performance level with Intel-based systems, but wants to fully utilize the opportunities which have been given with the move to the PowerPC. "Developers who jump on the PowerUP bandwagon today can make their products ready for multiprocessing quite easily. Therefore it will be possible to take two giant steps - from a single-CPU 68k system to a Multi-CPU PowerPC system - within only one year, an impressive progress for the Amiga community which many have not thought possible" Dietrich adds.

The pre\box system is designed on a ATX formfactor motherboard and incorporates a fast SDRAM-based memory subsystem with initially up to 100 MHz memory speed. Depending on the actual bus speed of the PowerPC processors which are used, the processor bus also runs at up to 100 MHz. The four PowerPC

processors, which are located on a separate CPU card, will be equipped with inline or backside caches, also depending on which type of processor is actually used. As the PowerUP System Software features a software-controlled cache coherency, the pre\box can even be equipped with CPUs which do not offer hardware support for multiprocessing, such as the PPC603e or the PPC750 (G3).

The pre\box system also has an integrated 3D graphics subsystem, which is connected via a 66 MHz PCI 2.1 bus with a peak performance of 264 MB/s and comes with eight MB of graphics memory. With this gfx subsystem, a powerful standard is provided as the minimum base configuration on which software designers can rely. But more than that: On the same 66 MHz PCI bus there is a special slot for a Voodoo2-based 3D accelerator card which is directly coupled to the built-in gfx chip. "We plan to provide, either on our own or in cooperation with other vendors, a Voodoo2-based solution as a powerful upgrade option" comments Wolf Dietrich. "We will not forget the demands of the serious gamers."

Also as standard, there will be an integrated Ultra-Wide SCSI-II controller and a 100 Mbit ethernet controller available, which will allow usage of today's powerful UW-SCSI devices and provide fast network connectivity - a feature which will also support the distributed multiprocessing concepts of phase 5 digital products.

For the use of inexpensive hardware expansions, a PCI bus with three standard PCI slots is integrated. This PCI bus runs at 66 MHz, but will also accept 33 MHz PCI boards. With the PCI bus integrated, development of new stunning hardware products for the pre\box systems is quite easy; more than that, developers can use standard PCI products and adopt them for the pre\box systems by simply writing software support for them.

Yet not decided is, if there will be a socket for an optional 68k CPU left on the board. "In this next-generation product, the consequent option for using 68k software will be emulation. We are continuously encouraging Amiga developers to support our new MP software technologies and guidelines which we introduced with our PowerUP System Software, and those who follow these recommendations will be able to provide applications that utilize the vast power of our upcoming pre\box system right away. This is where efforts should be spent now" says Wolf Dietrich.

Beside these main features, the pre\box will offer all standard functionality which is expected from a computer system today, such as fast serial and parallel interfaces, a USB bus, and an EIDE interface for use of e.g. inexpensive CD-ROM drives or additional cheap harddrives.

The pre\box release is scheduled for the early fourth quarter 1998. The pricing of the pre\box system is already determined based on the current pricings for PowerPC processors. Currently it is planned to offer the following versions of the pre\box with the following suggested retail prices:

pre\box 604/800 with four PPC604e-200 MHz CPUs suggested retail price DM 3.995,-- / US\$ 1995.00/ UKP 1495.00 pre\box 604/1000 with four PPC604r-250 MHz CPUs suggested retail price DM 4.995,-- / US\$ 2495.00/ UKP 1895.00 pre\box 604/1200 with four PPC604r-300 MHz CPUs suggested retail price DM 6.995,-- / US\$ 3395.00/ UKP 2595.00 pre\box 750/1200 with four PPC750-300 MHz CPUs, each with 1 MByte Backside Cache suggested retail price DM 8.995,-- / US\$ 4495.00/ UKP 3395.00

These prices are valid for pre\box systems in an ATX minitower, including mouse and keyboard, as well as AMIGA OS 3.1 and the PowerUP System Software, excluding memory, harddrive and CD-ROM. For an entry-level configuration of memory, harddrive and CD-ROM (32MB, 4GB, 24speed) an additional DM 750,-- (US\$ 375.00 or UKP 275.00) must be considered.

(German and UK prices include VAT, US prices excl. local taxes, all prices are based on the current currency exchange rates. Specifications and prices are subject to change without prior notice).

In order to support and encourage customers of PowerUP boards for existing Amigas, phase 5 digital products will offer substantial discounts on the purchase of pre\box systems to owners of PowerUP boards. "We want to provide security for the investments of the users today. Obviously, Amiga users and developers need to see a fast growing base of PowerPC systems in these days, in order to support the progress of developments. We want to encourage the users to invest in PowerPC technology now" comments Wolf Dietrich. Owners of PowerUP boards who later take advantage of the discounts on purchases of a pre\box system will not have to return their PowerUP boards to receive this discount, but can continue to use their PowerUP-Amiga as a stand-alone system or even use it's performance from the pre\box via a link system which will be provided with the pre\box, and with which the networked multiprocessing feature of the PowerUP System Software can be utilized.

With this new product roadmap and variety of powerful and stunning products to come, phase 5 digital products underscores it's position as the leading innovator in PowerPC hardware and system software development in the Amiga market. "We want to further support the Amiga market with these efforts" states Wolf Dietrich. "Part of our efforts will also be to support the developers, and to encourage them to develop for PowerUP with our best endeavours. We will do whatever is possible for us to make existing developers stay with the Amiga, and will also try to win back Amiga developers who have left the platform or put developments on hold. Recent releases of PowerUP compatible software products, which had been realized within just a few weeks by their developers, show how easy and efficiently existing Amiga software products can be ported to support the new processor and performance generation. To convince software developers, we also need to make them aware of the market potential and the outlook to the future that we offer. All users can support these efforts, too, by contacting their favourite Software vendors and requesting PowerUP versions of their software."

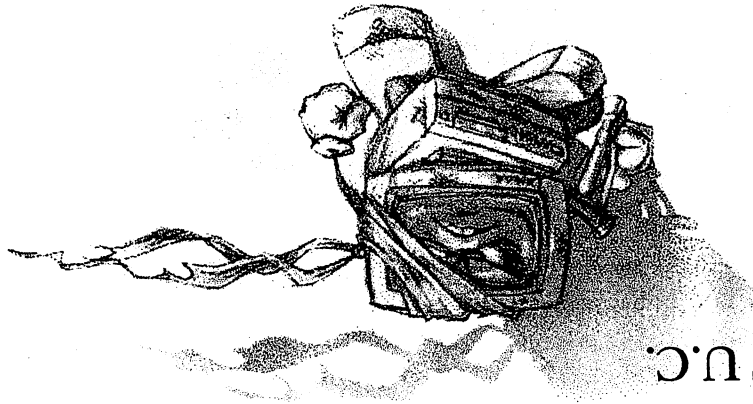
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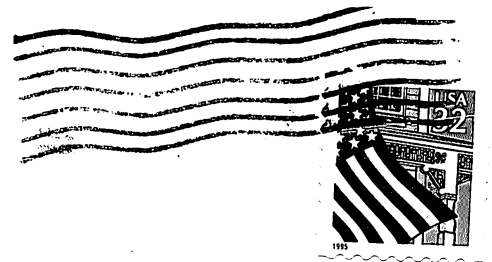
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The Survivor.  
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